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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 1362
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 000763

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2012
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [KPAL](#) [SU](#) [AF](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: BAN ON DARFUR, IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, QUARTET

REF: USUN 747

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

1. (C) During his monthly lunch with Security Council PermReps September 17, SYG Ban promised an increased UN role in Afghanistan and Iraq and reported the Italians may provide the aviation assets necessary to support UNAMID deployment. He also said the September 23 Quartet meeting should not be considered a preparatory meeting for the upcoming international meeting on a future Palestinian state to be hosted by the USG. South African PR Kumalo unsuccessfully tried to draw Ban out on the reported Israeli air strike in Syria. On the margins of the meeting, Ban privately advised Amb Khalilzad that Afghanistan SRSG Koenigs would depart his post at the end of the year and that Norway's Kai Eide is interested in the position.

Sudan

2. (C) Ban reported that Italian Prime Minister Prodi called to offer Italy's assistance in providing the aviation assets needed for UNAMID deployment. Ban observed that, although the Government of Sudan is saying all the right things, issues on the ground remain problematic. He highlighted, however, Bashir's recent statement in Rome that he intends to declare a unilateral ceasefire in the run-up to the meeting in Tripoli. DPKO U/SYG Guehenno urged SC delegations to make statements encouraging the GOS to cooperate with UNAMID deployment. Ban said the international community needed to strike the right balance in managing the participation in Tripoli of SPLM faction leader Abdul Wahid al-Nur. Noting that the French and certain celebrities are working to encourage al-Nur's attendance, and expressing hope that these efforts succeed, Ban said it also needs to be made clear that no single party can block progress. Ban raised the need to establish a trust fund to support the political track. Although the Libyans will support the upcoming meeting in Tripoli, there will be a need to fund additional activities in support of peace negotiations. (Note: It was not clear whether this trust fund would be the same as the development trust fund Ban called for previously, including during September 12 consultations with the Council. See USUN 747. End Note.)

Iraq

3. (C) Ban shared the news of his recent appointment of Staffan di Mistura as the new SRSG for Iraq, and noted his

intention to increase the UN role in Iraq, per UNSCR 1770. In discussing the upcoming September 22 ministerial, Ban said the meeting will focus on national reconciliation, regional diplomacy, the International Compact for Iraq, and humanitarian issues. He reported that 15,000 Iraqis are displaced, internally or externally, each week.

Quartet, Middle East

¶4. (C) Ban clarified that the September 23 Quartet meeting should not be seen as a preparatory meeting for the international conference to be hosted by the USG on a future Palestinian state. The Quartet meeting will cover a number of issues. (Note: Ban did not specify which issues. End Note.) He said that Hamas must be more realistic, but that the international community should also encourage the restoration of a unity government as the current situation is unsustainable.

¶5. (C) South African PR Kumalo asked Ban if he could share any information on the reported recent Israeli air strike in Syria. Ban said he had no information other than what was in the press. DPA U/SYG Pascoe confirmed that the UN had no information on this incident.

Afghanistan

¶6. (C) Ban committed to increasing the UN role in Afghanistan, but reported difficulties in recruiting staff (25 percent of the positions remain unfilled). He noted that the UN had doubled its presence outside of Kabul, expanding

USUN NEW Y 00000763 002 OF 002

in the past year from nine to 17 offices, which partially explained the staffing gap.

¶7. (C) Separately, Ban advised Amb Khalilzad that Koenigs agreed that he would leave his position at the end of the year. (Note: His contract does not expire until February 2008. End Note.) Ban said the UN is talking to former Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide, who is reportedly interested in the position.

Comment

¶8. (C) Ban's remarks were delivered in the light of four ministerials he is hosting in the run-up to the General Debate of the UN General Assembly. The General Debate includes the participation of heads of state and foreign ministers and will be held this year from September 25 - October 3. Ban is co-hosting with AU chair Konare a high-level meeting on Darfur September 21; with Iraqi PM Maliki a high-level meeting on Iraq September 22; with Afghanistan President Karzai a high-level meeting on Afghanistan September 23; and a Quartet meeting and iftar September 23.

KHALILZAD